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PROGRAMMABLE RESTRICTED ACCESS FOOD STORAGE CONTAINER AND  
BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION ASSISTANT

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to the field of restricted access storage containers that enforce a schedule of accessibility upon their contents, and to the field of devices and systems intended to aid their users in modifying their behavior as it relates to the self-regulation of dietary consumption, and as it relates to the conservation and preservation of the user's finite supply of human willpower.

10 PRIOR ART

15 It is known by those practiced in the art that human consumption of inappropriate quantities of certain products is detrimental to human health, and that failure to successfully self-regulate the consumption of such products negatively impacts the areas of human self-image, healthy weight maintenance, and general health. Examples of the types of 20 such products include, but are not limited to, food (particularly, "junk food"), tobacco products, alcohol products, etc. It is also widely known that children are particularly susceptible to the development of inappropriate 25 consumption patterns when provided with unlimited access to "junk food," leading to current record levels of obesity and similar health problems in the United States, and contributing negatively to their health, longevity, self image, and feelings of well-being. The increasing commonness of obesity 30 is of rising concern to medical professionals in developed nations.

Though these facts are well known, it is also known that a substantial percentage of the population maintains supplies of such products in their homes or offices, and that they do 35 so with the intention and/or desire to self regulate their

1 behavior, and avoid over consumption. Unfortunately, it is  
also known that a measurable and substantial percentage of the  
population fails in that effort. The number and popularity of  
5 diet related products available on the market is a testament  
to these known facts.

10 The desire for consumers to find a way to be able to have  
quantities of various products in their homes or offices, and  
yet to limit their own or others' usage or consumption of  
those products, is well known and there are many devices known  
in the prior art which attempt to assist consumers in that  
endeavor. Beyond the desired usage of such devices to enforce  
15 upon the user an appropriate consumption pattern, it is known  
that consumers wish to be able to modify their behavior and  
habits regarding the usage or consumption of such products,  
toward obtaining and developing better habits of consumption  
and strength of self discipline over time, thus diminishing  
the need for reliance on devices of this type, and increasing  
their chances for realizing their long term goals to better  
20 their lives and health.

25 None of the devices disclosed in the prior art are  
effective in mandating compliance with a desired consumption  
pattern, and in assisting the user in his or her efforts to  
not only control current consumption, but to develop better,  
more healthy, and more controlled patterns of consumption  
through successfully overcoming limited, controlled and  
conquerable impulses to consume.

30 In purchasing a device designed solely and specifically  
for the purpose of scheduling or restricting access to some  
product, the user acknowledges and expresses: 1 the desire  
that there be a schedule of accessibility and/or consumption  
durably imposed upon the contents of the device; 2 the  
existence of periods of physical and/or mental weakness  
35 wherein the user is unable or less likely to adhere to such a

desired schedule without assistance; and 3 the intention to rely upon the purchased device to enforce the schedule.

Presumably, the user would purchase and activate such a device during a period when the user had his best intentions in mind, rather than during a period of weakness, intending to rely upon the device to enforce the desired schedule of consumption. The very purchase of the device indicates the user's recognition that he experiences recurring periods of weakness during which he is unable to control his conduct to make it conform to his best intentions.

Devices of this type which inherently and repeatedly present opportunities or temptations for the user to change, circumvent, or disable, the pre-defined access parameters during normal usage and/or at easily predictable intervals, fail in their designed and intended purpose because they cannot rigorously and strictly enforce the users desired and designed schedule of accessibility. Given that the user of such a device, in recognition of his own weakness, has purchased and is using a device designed solely and specifically for the purpose of scheduling access to some product, any situation or feature, inherent to the design of such a device, that repeatedly could tempt the user to, or provides any means to, access the contents of the device outside of the user's desired and defined schedule of accessibility, is an unacceptable failing weakness of a device that is designed purely to durably and repeatedly enforce a scope of behavior.

Full understanding of some of the fundamental problems left unsolved by the prior art is arrived from study of the science of human psychology. In particular, the inventor has identified, through the study of numerous recent scientific publications, a problematical human behavioral trait that directly undermines and contributes to the inevitable failure and ineffectuality of all prior art devices of this type. The

1 fundamental unsolved problem is that the human supply of the  
will to self regulate: (a) is of a diminishable nature; (b) is  
5 replenished by rest; (c) can be conserved; and (d) can be  
exercised by means of a strictly limited, and thus easy to  
resist, opportunity to positively overcome temptation.

Specifically, scientific articles published in the field  
of human psychology confirm that the human capacity to resist  
temptation is finite and diminishing, such that the act of  
10 resisting a temptation or "opportunity for failure" diminishes  
the consumer's capacity to continue to resist future such  
temptations and opportunities. The more opportunities for  
failure (or temptations) a consumer confronts in his efforts  
15 to regulate consumption, the less capacity the consumer will  
retain to succeed in resisting other such opportunities, and  
the more likely it is that the consumer will fail in the long  
term effort to repeatedly regulate consumption and to develop  
better consumption habits through habituation and positive  
reinforcement.

20 In contrast, the published scientific articles confirm  
that when the human will is tested in a limited, measurable  
and controlled manner, the consumer's chances of successfully  
bypassing the immediate temptation are substantially  
increased. When exposed to a temptation that is momentary in  
25 nature, people are generally able to adhere to their self-  
defined best intentions concerning consumption of a tempting,  
available, or offered product. And the publications confirm  
that over time, the act of successfully resisting such  
temptations directly contributes by means of positive  
30 reinforcement and by repetitive habituation, to the  
development in the user an enhanced capacity to resist  
temptation, and an improved ability of the user to practice a  
more beneficial manner and habit of consumption.

Thus, the scientific studies confirm the idea that even  
35 if the user of a restricted access device which presents

1       repeated and unnecessary opportunities for the user to change,  
circumvent or disable the pre-defined access parameters during  
normal usage and/or at easily predictable intervals is  
5       successful in resisting one of the opportunities, the user  
does so by means of the consumption of some part of his finite  
supply of the will to self regulate, and does thus become,  
after repeated attempts to resist such temptations, less and  
less able to resist additional opportunities and temptations.  
10      By repeatedly presenting such opportunities, and by creating  
the need to overcome them again and again in order to maintain  
the desired consumption schedule, such a device actually wears  
down the user's will to resist the presented temptations.  
Rather than assisting in the development of the ability to  
15      resist such opportunities and temptations, such a device will  
actually contribute to the occurrence, degree, and frequency  
of periods of weakness, and thus, in an self defeating cycle,  
to the inability of the user to resist the devices in-built  
opportunities and temptations to fail.

20      Devices presenting such opportunities are self defeating,  
and present opportunities and temptations that are too  
frequent, too numerous and too difficult to overcome over  
time, leading to failure. There are no prior art devices that  
address or solve this problem.

25      The periodical *Journal of Personality and Social  
Psychology* (1998. Vol. 74. No. 5, 1252-1265), published by the  
American Psychological Society, contains an article describing  
a study entitled *Ego Depletion: Is the Active Self a Limited  
Resource?* This series of studies and experiments, executed at  
30      Case Western University by Baumeister, Bratlavsky, Muraven,  
and Tice, measures the depletion of the subject's internal  
reservoir of will, and the resulting effects of this depletion  
upon the subject's ability to extend his or her ability to  
exercise this will upon secondary tasks. The results of the  
35      study show a decreased ability to exercise focused mental

1           energy after temptation and other forms of depleting behavior  
have depleted this reservoir of mental energy. As stated in  
the section of the study titled *Implications*:

5           "Moreover, this resource (of mental  
energy) appears to be quite surprisingly  
limited. In study 1, for example, a mere  
10          5 minutes of resisting temptation in the  
form of chocolate caused a reduction by  
half in how long people made themselves  
keep trying at unsolvable puzzles. It  
seems surprising to suggest that a few  
15          minutes of a laboratory task, especially  
one that was not described as excessively  
noxious or strenuous, would seriously  
deplete some important aspect of the self.  
Thus, these studies suggest that whatever  
is involved in choice and self-control is  
both an important and very limited  
20          resource. The activities of the self  
should perhaps be understood in general as  
having to make the most of a scarce and  
precious resource."

This study puts forward and supports the idea that the  
25          energy of the human ego is of a diminishable nature, that it  
is easily depleted by events requiring the exercise of will,  
and that its depletion has negative effects upon the human  
ability to succeed at other tasks that require expenditure of  
this same common reservoir of energy, suggesting that this  
30          reservoir of the will is common and integral to human  
functions that require focus and discipline.

The periodical "Psychological bulletin (2000. Vol. 126.  
35          No 2,247-259)", published by the American Psychological  
Association, contains a study titled "Self-Regulation and  
Depletion of Limited Resources: Does Self-Control Resemble a

1 Muscle?". This study, executed at Case Western University by  
Muraven and Baumeister, finds that there is evidence that the  
human will to self-regulate is of a variably finite capacity,  
5 is diminished by use, and is replenished by rest. These  
findings show that repeated testings of, and subsequent  
expenditures of, the reserve of the human will to self  
regulate, results in the subjects being increasingly less able  
to resist subsequent temptations. As stated in the study's  
10 conclusion:

15 "People have only a limited capacity to  
control and alter their behavior, and this  
capacity appears to be vulnerable to  
depletion in the aftermath of strenuous  
use." The conclusion further states that  
"when people squander their self-control  
strength in unproductive endeavors, they  
may find that their self-control breaks  
down in other unrelated spheres."

20 This study refines the idea of the "diminishable and  
replenishable reservoir of the will to self regulate" by  
successfully testing to eliminate as factors in subject  
performance other effects such as learned helplessness, and  
mood. Additionally, this article describes other successful  
25 experiments showing that this reservoir of will is capable of  
being generally increased in capacity by reasonable and  
measured exercise over time, much like the strength of a  
skeletal muscle being built up by measured and correct  
exercise interspersed with periods of rest.

30 The article "Self-Defeating Behavior Patterns Among  
Normal Individuals: Review and Analysis of Common Self-  
Destructive Tendencies (1988, Vol. 104, No. 1, 3-22) from the  
Psychological Bulletin of the American Psychological  
Association, studies and explains how and why normal human  
35 beings sometimes make choices that have obvious and negative

1 impacts upon their own well being. The motivations exposed  
5 and discussed in this study include deliberate self-destruction (choosing to suffer), counter productive strategy  
10 (internal tradeoffs that appear to have some momentary benefit but are in the long run damaging), guilt motivated desire  
15 (self punishing behavior), and self-handicapping (doing things that reduce the likelihood of success at some evaluative task). A common denominator of these motivations is the involvement of the feelings of self-esteem of the subject. In some instances high self esteem may cause a person to set unrealistic goals at the onset of a chosen path so that when failure results, the blame can be placed upon the difficulty of the path chosen rather than upon the performance of the subject. In other instances, low self-esteem may cause a person to deliberately fail at some chosen task as a way to justify/prove their low opinion of themselves. In both instances, opportunities to fail are used by the subject in ways that have little or nothing to do with the actual task at hand.

20 This study shows and implies that the elimination or reduction and the control of failure opportunities does enable a person to more easily and more consistently resist counter productive impulses to fail, resulting not only in a better likelihood of a task completed, but in a more likely fulfillment of the best intentions of the person, and further resulting in increased feelings of self worth. Moreover, the study implies that a tool that controls and reduces the instances of opportunities to fail will help the user to resist the types of counter productive impulses that would otherwise cause them to subvert their best intentions.

30 These scientific references demonstrate that prior art devices which require the user to repeatedly resist temptation and to make decisions and take actions in order to use the device, or which do not provide for any exercise at all of the

1 user's will, do not present a solution to this previously  
5 misunderstood social/psychological problem, nor do they incorporate a means to tap into, exploit and enhance a consumer's capacity to resist temptation as recognized and defined in the science of human behavior. Prior art devices which repeatedly rely upon the will of the user are self defeating. None of the prior art devices present the unique benefits and characteristics provided by the present  
10 invention.

15 The basic common principles of operation of the prior art inventions and the common limitations of their basic design features and components provides an efficient means to categorize them in terms of their efficacy, and to illuminate common physical details and shortcomings inherent to the device groups. There are essentially three different types of prior art devices, as follows:

Limited Access Container Prior Art Devices

20 The desire to regulate consumption through the storage of products in containers that allow only limited access is known in the prior art, and the prior art discloses containers that can be set to restrict access to its contents except at a specified time. U.S. Patent No.5,129,536 Robinson, July 14,  
25 1992, which discloses a TIME ACTUATED LOCKABLE FOOD STORAGE CONTAINER consisting of a sealable food storage box with a locking mechanism and removable timing device capable of enforcing a single and variable delay upon the users access to the contents of the container; U.S. Patent No. 3,851,506 Simon, December 3, 1974, which discloses a CIGARETTE BOX that makes use of an internally situated locking mechanism that causes the box to unlock after a selected period of time; and U.S. Patent No. 5,016,453 Bonnice, May 21, 1991 which discloses a TIMED REFRIGERATOR LOCK consisting of a body  
30 mounted link chain and a door mounted shackle that is combined  
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1       with a timing device capable of allowing the link chain to be  
detached from the shackle at a pre-determined point in time,  
thus allowing the refrigerator door to be opened.

5       Prior art devices of this type provide unnecessary and  
repeated means for the user to fail in his expressed desire to  
adhere to a pre-defined schedule of accessibility, because 1  
they rely upon the will and physical action of the user to  
close their doors or tops; 2 they rely upon the will and  
10      physical action of the user to re-activate or engage the  
locked state of their doors or tops; 3 they rely upon the will  
of the user to resist the temptation to neglect completing  
either or both of those acts; 4 they rely upon the will of the  
15      user to resist the urge, impulse, or temptation to change the  
pre-defined access parameters; 5 they rely upon the will of  
the user to resist the urge, impulse, or temptation to suspend  
the enforcement of the pre defined access parameters; 6 they  
do not offer a means to exclude non-authorized persons from  
accessing their contents; 7 without action of the user, the  
20      container becomes open or unlocked automatically; 8 once  
having become open or unlocked automatically, the container  
remains in the open or unlocked state indefinitely until reset  
by the user; and 9 as a result of the preceding two failings,  
devices of this type require the user to interface with the  
25      device, and its contents, in order to relock the device.

Devices in this group inherently and repeatedly present opportunities or temptations for the user to change, circumvent or disable the pre-defined access parameters during normal usage and/or at easily predictable intervals. The 30      existence of such opportunities is an unacceptable failing and/or weakness of such a device because the device inevitably will provide such opportunities during periods of weakness when the user is mentally or physically unable to resist the temptation - the existence of these periods is a given, as a consumer who does not experience such periods of weakness

1       would have little desire to purchase and use a device of this  
5       type.

5       And even if a user of a device of this type is successful  
10      in resisting opportunities or temptations to change,  
15      circumvent or disable the pre-defined access parameters during  
      normal usage and/or at easily predictable intervals, the user  
      does so by means of the consumption of some part of his finite  
      supply of the will to self regulate, and does thus become,  
      after repeated attempts to resist temptation, less and less  
      able to resist additional opportunities and temptations.

15      Devices presenting such opportunities are self defeating,  
      in that they present opportunities and temptations that are  
      too frequent, too numerous and too difficult to overcome over  
      time, leading to inevitable failure.

#### Multiple Compartment and Portion Vending Machines

20      The desire to regulate consumption through the storage of  
      products in containers that allow access to, or dispense,  
25      measured portions of their contents is known in the prior art,  
      and the prior art discloses containers that either are made up  
      of a multiplicity of individually accessible compartments or  
      contain mechanisms capable of dispensing measured portions of  
      their contents. This class of prior art inventions has as a  
      defining feature in the means to dispense, or allow access to,  
      single pre-portioned amounts of a product, either through  
      timed access to proportioned dose, timed access to a  
      compartment containing a single portion, or an automated  
      mechanized measurement and dispensation of a portion.

30      This group includes inventions such as 3,762,601  
      McLaughlin 1973 which discloses a CABINET FOR DISPENSING  
      MEDICINES AT PREDETERMINED TIMES consisting of a box  
      containing a multiplicity of individually and programmably  
      accessible compartments; 4,674,652, Aten, 1987 which discloses  
35      a CONTROLLED DISPENSING DEVICE making use of a tape and spool

1 mechanism wherein pre-measured portions are affixed to a  
5 programmably advanceable tape and are made available when they  
10 align with an access port; 4,572,403, Benaroya, 1986 which  
15 discloses A TIMED DISPENSING DEVICE FOR TABLETS, CAPSULES, AND  
THE LIKE making use of an enclosed rotating toroidal tray,  
20 divided into a multiplicity of compartments, each of which is  
designed to accept a pre-portioned quantity of a pill or  
capsule. The enclosed toroidal tray revolving according to a  
schedule, and the contents of the individual compartments  
becoming accessible singly and sequentially as they become  
aligned with an access port; and GB 2 233 317 A, Gad, 1991  
which discloses A TIMED MEDICATION DISPENSER comprised of a  
25 container consisting of a securable compartment for the  
acceptance and storage of a substance and a receptacle for  
receiving the dispensation of that substance in measured doses  
according to some schedule (the mechanism that would portion  
the output or select specific pills to dispense is not  
disclosed in this prior art patent).

20 This type of prior art inventions require the individual  
packaging of their contents or require that their contents be  
individually portioned and placed, one portion at a time, in a  
multiplicity of compartments. These arrangements are too time  
consuming for the consumer to use, too expensive to  
25 manufacture, and use a less space efficient storage method  
rendering them impractical for general consumer usage.  
Generally, products available at retail outlets are not  
packaged in manners that provide the uniformity required to  
work in these devices. Dietary portioning is a relative  
30 exercise. What may be an appropriate portion for one person  
may be an overdose for another. Uniform packaging is not a  
viable principle in this application. Additionally, the  
variable nature of appropriate portioning makes this approach  
impractical for general consumer use.

1        In addition, the user of a device of this type is merely  
5        a receiver for the dispensations of the device. As shown in  
          the science, a measured and limited interaction of the user's  
          will to self-regulate is necessary in order for the user to  
10      receive the benefits of self-reward, elevated self-image, and  
          expanded capacity of the will to self-regulate. A device of  
          this type does not provide for any testing of the will of the  
          user. While such devices do not diminish the will to self  
          regulate by tempting the user to consume, they also do not  
          allow the user to succeed in his wishes to use his own will to  
          self regulate, and thus exercise and enhance their will to  
          self regulate resulting in the enhanced development and  
          repeatability of the desired behavior. By eliminating all  
15      instances of temptation, these devices will not provide any  
          increased volume of the will to self regulate as described in  
          the science.

Non-Enforcing Behavior Modification Assistant

20      The desire to regulate consumption by means of a device  
          which instructs the user as to the specifics of a corrected  
          and more beneficial schedule or manner is known in the prior  
          art. The prior art discloses devices, defined as non-  
25      enforcing behavior modification assistants, that give  
          instruction as to the amount, constituents, speed and/or  
          frequency of correct consumption. These devices also may in  
          some cases impart words of encouragement. As a group, these  
          prior art inventions are devoid of any means to enforce the  
          indicated correct course of action, and they instead rely  
30      purely upon the will of the user to resist impulses to act  
          counter to the offered course of action.

35      This group includes prior art inventions such as  
          5,673,691 Abrams, 1997, which discloses an APPARATUS TO CONTROL  
          DIET AND WEIGHT USING HUMAN BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES,  
          herein described as a device capable of prompting the user

1       when to eat and exercise, and of providing suggestions as to  
what to eat, and requiring the inputting of actual consumption  
information as a means to determine a further course of  
5       action; 5,596,994, Bro, 1997, which discloses an AUTOMATED AND  
INTERACTIVE BEHAVIORAL AND MEDICAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM, herein  
described as a computerized system which by means of a variety  
of electronic collection and transmission methods and  
technologies is capable of collecting information about the  
10      subject user and of using that collected data to impart  
customized instructions as to corrected behavior and of  
imparting words of encouragement; 4,361,408, Wirtschafter,  
15      1982, which discloses a TIMER AND ALARM APPARATUS, herein  
described as a device that when attached to a freely  
accessible container such as a pill bottle is capable of  
providing scheduled alarms as prompts for scheduled  
consumption; 4,218,611, Cannon, 1980, which discloses a METHOD  
AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING EATING BEHAVIOR, herein  
described as a device capable of indicating the correct tempo  
20      of eating a meal and that requires an action between each  
"fork full" that indicates to the device that a "fork full"  
has been eaten thus forcing a break in action between "fork  
sized" portions; and 5,908,301, Lutz, 1999 which discloses a  
METHOD AND DEVICE FOR MODIFYING BEHAVIOR, herein described as  
25      a device capable of storing multiple programs of behavior and  
of indicating the corresponding correct course of action.  
This class or group of inventions has as a defining feature  
the absence of any enforcement means regarding the prompted  
action.

30      The prior art inventions in this group do not provide any  
means for enforcement of limits placed upon the accessibility  
of the products and do not provide any durable and repeating  
means for enforcement of limits placed upon the accessibility  
of the products. The intended scope of this type of invention  
35      is too large and there is no enforcement of limits placed upon

1           the accessibility of the products. By design, these  
5           inventions cause, by temptation, multiple testings and  
          expenditures of the will to self regulate, and provide no  
          means to provide the necessary periods of rest (periods of  
          absence of temptations) that are necessary to enable the  
10          development of the available capacity of the will. By not  
          limiting temptations, these devices provide multiple  
          opportunities to fail. By not limiting temptations, these  
          devices deplete the available will to self regulate until  
          failure at the desired discipline results. By attempting to  
          control a very broad scope of behaviors these devices cause  
          the user to be repeatedly tested and thus more likely to be  
          depleted in their ability to resist impulses to act counter to  
15          their desired behavior.

20          Taken as a whole, the scientific studies and discussion  
          of prior art devices outlined above indicate that devices  
          disclosed in the prior art which do not afford the user any  
          durably consistent and repeating enforcement means that would  
25          aid the user in resisting the types of urges and  
          counterproductive motivations that are the causes of the  
          original negative behavior pattern, are not effective in  
          durably restricting access to the content of the devices, nor  
          in the modification of human behavior toward the development  
          of a more desirable pattern of consumption and "willpower".

30          Consumers want a restricted access storage device that  
          will effectively, consistently and even ruthlessly mandate  
          compliance with a desirable pattern of consumption. Moreover,  
          consumer's want to work toward developing the ability and  
35          strength (or, "willpower") within themselves to be able to  
          adhere to such a pattern of consumption, eventually without  
          the assistance of a device of this type. Many consumers  
          believe what is known by those practiced in the art; that the  
          successful mastery of a narrow scope of positive behaviors can  
          result in positive ramifications effecting a broad scope of

1 other behaviors. None of the prior art devices provide the consumer with what it wants, and none present the benefits and the utility of the present invention.

5 3. The current invention's unique design characteristics solve the fundamental problem.

The present invention's unique design characteristics eliminate all unnecessary opportunities to fail except for the 10 one involving the act of portioning. As described in detail below, the desired ends are achieved through a number of design characteristics unique to the current invention, and not disclosed in any of the prior art devices, including: 1 15 the present invention's lid/door does not remain in the open position - during normal use it automatically closes without the assistance of the user; 2 the present invention does not need to be "re-locked" at each access event - the lid/door automatically and immediately relocks upon closure without the assistance of the user; 3 the device does not need to be 20 opened in order for it to become "re-locked" at the expiration of an access period -- the locking mechanism automatically and immediately removes access permission upon expiration of the user defined access period regardless of whether it was opened during the access period; 4 the present invention does not 25 need to be reset after having become unlocked - - the pre-defined access schedule is automatically kept in place and is durably repeated and enforced over time regardless the normal actions of the user; 5 the present invention does not allow the user to impulsively "change his mind" regarding the 30 strictness of the regimen originally selected and inputted into the invention - access to the processor prompts that define access parameters is limited to a relatively rare and non instinctive cyclical time period that requires forethought and planning to access; 6 the present invention includes a 35 password feature, preventing others from accessing the

1       contents of the device or from tampering with the selected  
5       access parameters; 7 the present invention durably stores and  
enforces the user's original intentions over unlimited periods  
of time, and 8 the prompts that lead the user through the  
defining of their access schedule are designed to  
systematically present only choices that support the  
previously defined steps thus reducing the ability of the user  
to impulsively deviate from their pre-intended schedule, which  
10      is most likely and most often the schedule that the user truly  
wants enforced.

15      In the current invention, the limited opportunity for the  
consumer to fail in the effort to resist temptation is so  
diminished through elimination of all unnecessary  
opportunities that the user can easily and regularly overcome  
any secondary temptation to fail at their desired behavior  
path. By means of this easy success, and by means of the  
absence of any other opportunities to fail in their desired  
behavior path, the user is more likely to succeed and in doing  
20      so receive positive reinforcement of his ability to succeed at  
self-regulating his consumption

25      Thus, the present invention both mandates compliance with  
the restricted access pattern selected by the consumer when he  
had his best intentions and long term health in mind, and  
assists the consumer in preserving, and indeed developing  
through limited exercise, the consumer's limited supply of  
willpower.

30      And through the use of a password feature, the current  
invention allows the user to prevent access to the contents of  
the device by all persons other than the user. None of the  
prior art devices disclose this capability.

Examples of Applications of the Current Embodiment of the  
Invention.

1       Discussed here are a few examples demonstrating use of  
the device in ways not available with the prior art devices.  
There are many other unique uses not listed here -- the  
5       following are merely a few examples:

10      Example 1 -- A user can decide that once the device  
becomes unlocked making the contents accessible, the user will  
in an instant lift the lid/door, take a portion of the product  
within it, and then immediately let the lid/door drop, thus  
triggering the auto lock mechanism. This requires virtually  
no effort from the user (no requirement to reset the device,  
or to physically lock it), no decision from the user other  
than to not take action to not allow the lid to drop, and  
results in a successful exercise of the will to self regulate,  
15      of a very limited duration. Usage of the invention in this  
manner precludes impulsive re-portioning brought about  
following the consumer tasting the portion, triggering a  
heightened desire for more, and thus defeats the very idea  
behind advertising campaigns such as "bet ya can't eat just  
20      one."

25      Example 2 -- The user has only to resist temptation  
during the life of each access period (selected by the user  
when he set the device) and, without any further action,  
decision or conduct, the access period automatically expires  
and the device becomes locked again. Most notably, the lack  
of necessity for the user to interact with the device, and  
thus with its contents, eliminates unnecessary and painfully  
acute temptation resulting from that interaction.

30      Example 3 -- A user can decide that once the device  
becomes unlocked, the user will in an instant lift the  
lid/door without taking any of the contents, and immediately  
let it drop, thus triggering the auto lock mechanism. This  
requires virtually no effort from the user (no requirement to  
reset the device, or to physically lock it), and results in a  
35      successful exercise of the will to self regulate, of a very

1 limited duration. And once the lid drops, the user is unable  
to change his mind and gain access to the contents.

5 Example 4 -- A user can decide to program the device so  
that its defined periods of accessibility occur when the user  
is not generally in proximity with the device, allowing other  
persons to have access to the contents of the device in a way  
that does not deprive the user of the ability to be free from  
exposure to the contents of the device.

10 Example 5 -- A user can decide to program the device so  
that its defined periods of accessibility occur only when the  
user is generally in proximity with the device. In this way a  
user could ensure that others will not have unsupervised  
access to the contents of the invention when the user is not  
15 present. For "latchkey children" for example, the child's  
snacking habits could be controlled and modified by the  
ability of the invention to require the presence and  
permission of the householder to be able to access the  
contents of the invention.

20 Example 6 - A user (e.g., an office worker) may wish to  
keep a supply of a favorite snack on-hand, but only to be  
consumed at a certain time of day by the consumer, but not by  
others (e.g., co-workers). Through the durable timed access  
restriction, as well as the password feature, the present  
25 invention has this capability.

These are just a few examples of the types of uses to  
which the present invention can be put, that are not possible  
with the prior art devices.

30 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is comprised of a storage container for  
food that has as separate components, a container, and a  
lid/door assembly that is detachable from the container for  
the purposes of cleaning the container and for accessing the  
35 power supply.

1           The lid door assembly consisting of an multi-piece outer  
casing that houses multiple components that together enable  
the lid/door assembly to be capable of accepting, storing, and  
5           enforcing, the users specified schedule of multiple,  
cyclically occurring, windows of opportunity, of user  
definable duration, concerning the availability/accessibility  
of any product that can be contained within its attached  
container.

10          The lid assembly components consisting of its casing, a  
power supply, an electronic programmable processor assembly  
with non-volatile memory capability, a button set, a display  
component, and an electro-mechanical locking mechanism and a  
power supply.

15          All of the parts that make up the invention are part of  
the lid/door assembly except for the container which has as  
its only special features 1 molded shapes in the upper  
container rim that allow it to mate in a low friction way with  
corresponding moldings in the case of the lid door assembly in  
20         such a way that there is a pivoting hinge relationship between  
the two components when they are correctly aligned and pressed  
together, and 2 other molded shapes in the upper container rim  
that allow for the acceptance and capture of protruding  
locking bars that are part of the lid/door assembly and that  
25         protrude from lid door assembly through openings in its casing  
in such a way as to be captured by these moldings in the upper  
container rim when the lid/door assembly becomes closed.

30          The lid/door assembly is unable to be left open in that  
its degree of motion is limited so that gravity will  
automatically close it when it is released from the hand.

              The locking mechanism is constructed in such a way that  
the automatic closing of the lid also effects an instantaneous  
locking of the lid/door assembly.

35          The users stored desired schedule of accessibility is  
enforced by the inventions permanent behaviors, that are part

1 of the design of the invention, in such ways as to remove all  
reasonable possibility of accessing the contents of the  
attached container except during a window of opportunity as  
5 defined by the user at the time that they programmed their  
desired schedule into the invention. This preclusion of  
opportunity results in reductions of opportunities to fail on  
the part of the user in their stated and defined desire of  
adhering to a strict schedule of accessibility regarding the  
10 contents of the invention. This beneficial reduction in the  
opportunities to fail resulting in an elevated level of  
adherence to the user defined schedule of accessibility and in  
a reduction of consumption of will power on the part of the  
user resulting in multiple and novel benefits to the user as  
15 described and explained in the background section of this  
document. These benefits are not found in the prior art.

Some of the reductions in opportunities to fail are the  
result of mechanical features and some are the result of  
programmed behaviors inherent to the operation of the  
20 invention.

Mechanical, electro-mechanical, and electronic features  
that contribute to the reduction in opportunities to fail  
include;

Its automatic closing functionality;  
25 Its automatic locking functionality;  
Its instantaneously locking upon becoming closed  
functionality;

Its ability to durably store all parameters despite the  
total depletion of the power source;

30 Its ability to sense a decrease in battery voltage and  
ability to use that sensed data as an indicator to prompt the  
user to change the batteries resulting in a greater likelihood  
that the user will be able to continue to use the device;

Its ability to sense the position of the lid in relation  
35 to the containers upper lid assembly.

1           Programming (software) features that contribute to the  
reduction in opportunities to fail include;

5           Its ability to prompt for and durably store data  
equivalents of the users designed and desired schedule  
regarding the accessibility of the contents of the invention;

10          Its ability to control the locking mechanism in such a  
way as to permit access strictly in accordance with the users  
designed and desired schedule and to extent that enforcement  
durably over time;

15          Its ability to automatically cycle the lock to the locked  
position immediately upon the action of the lid/door assembly  
being lifted;

20          Its ability to prompt the user for inputs regarding the  
definitions of multiple, cyclical, windows of opportunity of  
varying durations concerning the accessibility of the contents  
of the invention;

25          Its ability to prompt the user for inputs in a manner  
designed to eliminate opportunities to waver in their pre-  
determined intentions concerning the accessibility of the  
contents of the invention;

30          Its requiring an input by the user in order for the  
device to become unlocked;

25          Its ability to "expire" programmed periods of  
accessibility that are not made use of;

35          Its ability to optionally store and enforce a security  
feature where in the user defines and stores a security code  
that the invention will require input of in order for the user  
to be granted access to the contents of the invention;

30          Its ability to deny re-programming opportunities except  
at a predetermined cyclical interval designated by the  
inventor as being non-instinctive and not easily anticipated.

Other behaviors;

1        Its ability to determine that it has not been accessed  
for an extended period of time long enough, as determined and  
programmed by the inventor, to indicate either a disinterest  
5        in continuing the current program of accessibility or of  
indicating that the optional access code has been lost. In  
this case the invention cycles to the open state and resets  
thus allowing a new user to begin the programming phase or the  
existing user to re-select their programming and reassign an  
10      access code;

15      Its ability to sense a low power situation and if the  
user does not respond to promptings to replace the batteries  
to anticipate a critical voltage decrease and cycle the  
invention to the open state before it can be subjected to a  
"no power lockout" wherein there is no way to open the  
15      invention in order to access the interior accessible battery  
port;

20      Its programmed behavior, in the current iteration, of not  
giving any indication that a period of accessibility is  
current.

#### DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

25      FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of the exterior  
appearance of the present invention with its main exterior  
features named and enumerated

FIG. 2 shows an exploded view of the present invention  
with its important components and features named and  
enumerated.

30      FIG. 3 shows a view from above of the bottom lid door  
casing, the container rim moldings, and the electromechanical  
locking mechanism, with their main features and components  
named and enumerated.

35      FIG.4 shows a side view of the lid/door assembly casing  
with a separate detail of its hinge arrangement with their  
main features named and enumerated and a side view of a

1 container rim molding with hinge molding and other features  
named and enumerated.

## 5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In accordance with the objects of the invention, in the current preferred embodiment (as shown in FIG. 1) of the invention there is provided: a container 1 comprised of 4 walls (or a single cylindrical wall), a floor, and a molded container rim 2 designed to accept and receive an optionally removable and normally hinged locking lid/door assembly 3 that is capable of locking into the closed position and thus precluding access to the contents of the invention.

The molded container rim 2 and lid/door assembly 3 having  
15 indentations and protrusions consisting of indents and  
protrusions hinge 4, snap-in detent boss 25, hinge boss 26,  
lid stop 27, arranged and shaped in such a way as to provide  
for a pivoting, removable, hinge arrangement so that the  
lid/door assembly 3 may be removed completely from attachment  
20 to the molded container rim 2 by means of pressure applied in  
such a way that when the lid/door assembly 3 is lifted to a  
predetermined position it is able to be removed from its  
attachment to the molded container rim 2 In a reverse  
procedure the lid/door assembly 3 can be returned to its  
25 attachment to the molded container rim 2 by sliding it into  
the correct position and applying correct pressure resulting  
in a "snap in" fit that is of a low friction nature.

The molded container rim 2 having indentations (catchments) 5 arranged and shaped in such a way as to provide for the acceptance and capture of the locking bolts 8 that are part of the lid/door assembly's 3 electro mechanical locking mechanism 6 and in such a way as to allow for the low friction passage of the locking bolts 8) into their respective indentations (catchments) 5 regardless the locking bolts state or position.

1       The lid/door assembly 3 containing an electro mechanical  
5 locking mechanism 6 connected to and controlled by the  
electronic programmable processor assembly 7, and able to move  
two protruding locking bolts 8 in and out of the locked  
position according to the designed behavior that, in  
consideration of the angular position of the lid/door assembly  
3, prepares in advance the lid/door assembly 3 to be instantly  
locked into position when it is allowed to fall into the  
10 closed position or is otherwise closed.

15      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
comprised of an electronic processor, electronic memory,  
button set 10, display component 11, and other components,  
arranged, attached, and connected in such a way as to be  
capable of prompting for and durably storing data reflecting  
the users desires concerning the accessibility of the contents  
of the invention, within the framework of the behaviors  
allowed by the data stored in the permanently stored data set  
as defined and stored by the inventor.

20      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
arranged, attached, and connected in such a way as to be  
capable of controlling the electro-mechanical locking  
mechanism in a manner reflecting data stored in the  
permanently stored data set, the user defined data set, and  
25 the security data set.

30      The lid/door assembly 3 being capable, when correctly  
attached to the molded container rim, of falling into the  
completely closed position by means of gravity, by means of a  
low friction hinge arrangement, and by means of the low  
friction spring loaded action of the locking bolts 8 which are  
able to slide over the receiving catchments 5 that are molded  
into the upper rim of the receptacle, and of then  
instantaneously and positively locking into the closed  
position.

1       The lid/door assembly 3 containing an electronic  
5 programmable processor assembly 7, being capable, by means of  
a display component 11, of displaying textual prompts  
generated from and capable of accepting and storing user  
inputs into, the programmable electronic processor assembly 7.

10      The lid/door assembly containing an user accessible  
Button Set 10 for the purpose of enabling the user to input  
the chosen and prompted for parameters that make up the stored  
15 user defined data set, and for entering the input(s) that are  
prompted for and/or required by the invention, during normal  
usage of the invention, before access is allowed.

15      The lid/door assembly 3 containing a magnet sensor  
capable of determining the proximity of a magnet 13 that is  
securely and permanently placed in a corresponding position in  
the upper rim of the receptacle that is within the sensory  
limits of the magnet sensor when the lid/door is in the closed  
position.

20      The lid/door assembly 3 being unable, due to the design  
and shape of the device, to be opened to a degree sufficient  
to allow it to remain in the open position such that the  
lid/door assembly 3, when in the open position falls  
automatically into the closed position unless held in the open  
25 position by the user. This self closing behavior working in  
conjunction with the automatic locking actions of the  
electronic programmable processor assembly 7, magnet 13  
arrangement, and electro-mechanical locking mechanism 6 to  
provide for an automatic closing and locking action that is  
effected by the release of the lid/door assembly 3 from the  
30 users hand requiring no other action by the user to be  
completed.

35      The electromechanical locking mechanism 6 consisting of a  
motor 14, cam & gears 15 & 16, locking bars 8, micro-switch  
18, and springs 19 in such a way as to be capable of a  
cyclical locking and unlocking action and depending upon the

1        electrical motor 14 to cycle the lock. The locking bars 8  
being spring loaded so that when they are in the locking  
position they may be depressed, against the load of a spring,  
5        into the unlocked position, thus allowing the locking bars 8  
so slide along the locking latch catchment 5 and drop into the  
locked position. This functionality allows the lid/door  
assembly 3 to be placed in the closed position while the  
locking bars 8 are in the locked position and is essential to  
10      the automatic closing and locking action of the invention.

15      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
capable of using the data provided by the magnetic sensor to  
determine the proper necessary position of the locking bolts 8  
such that the locking bolts 8 are placed into the locked  
position immediately upon the users act of lifting of the  
lid/door assembly 3 causing the magnet 13 to be removed from  
relative proximity to the magnet sensor.

20      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7,  
contained within the lid/door assembly 3, being capable of  
accepting a set of inventor defined operational variables,  
("permanently stored data set") that controls and defines the  
operation of the connected electro-mechanical locking  
mechanism 6 in such a manner as to provide an semi-automated  
locking/unlocking action that either holds the lid/door  
25      assembly 3 in a closed position while the lid/door assembly 3  
is in a closed position, or does not hold the lid/door  
assembly 3 in a closed position while the lid/door assembly 3  
is in a closed position, as scheduled by, and in accordance  
with, the user defined set of operational variables ("user  
30      defined data set") and upon either an "open" button 21 being  
pressed or, an access code being entered.

35      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7  
presenting, by means of the display component 11, a textual  
user interface, constructed and arranged in such a way as to  
provide to the user a simple manner of recording and storing

1       their chosen input variables, as prompted for by the  
5       electronic programmable processor assembly 7 as displayed by  
         the display component 11 from data contained in the  
         permanently stored data set, and as constructed and arranged  
         in such a manner as to not present to the user options and  
         variables that do not apply to previously completed  
         programming steps that have been stored in the user defined  
         data set during the current programming session.

10      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
         capable of making use of the display component 11 and button  
         set 10 for the purpose of prompting for, accepting, and  
         storing in the user defined data set, data as defined and  
         input by the user.

15      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
         capable of controlling and working in conjunction with the  
         other active components of the electro-mechanical locking  
         mechanism 6 in such a way as to enforce the parameters of the  
         user defined data set as chosen, designed, defined, and input  
20       by the user, without any further involvement of the user, over  
         a considerable period of time. Said period of time being  
         limited only by the durability of the device and upon the  
         requirement that the user to refresh the power supply 20 when  
         it becomes expended. (In this iteration the power supply 20  
25       is comprised of batteries but there exists the possibility in  
         other iterations for the use of alternate power sources).

30      The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 being  
         capable of storing all data sets in the non-volatile memory  
         component of the electronic programmable processor assembly 7  
         so that all data sets can be durably enforced beyond the  
         exhaustion of the units power supply 20.

35      The Button Set 10 consisting of an array of protruding,  
         user actuate-able buttons including one "open button 21", one  
         program button 23, two directional buttons 24, and a  
         multiplicity of other buttons for the purposes of, opening the

1 invention, defining and entering access codes, and for  
effecting the entering of data into the user defined data set.

5 The power supply 20 being accessible by the user only  
when the device is in the open position and normally only  
easily accessed by the removal of the lid/door assembly 3 from  
the container.

10 The operational procedures inherent to the invention, by  
means of the permanently stored data set, causing the  
invention to behave in manners designed to reduce  
opportunities to fail regarding the users wishes as  
represented by their inputs to the user defined data set.  
These behaviors include; (A) the electro-mechanical locking  
mechanism 6, after having become unlocked in response to the  
correct and timely input by the user, returns to the locked  
position immediately upon the lid being lifted by the users  
action; (B) the electro-mechanical locking mechanism 6 does  
not become unlocked unless an appropriate and timely input is  
entered by means of the button set; (C) the invention does not  
20 respond to any input by the user unless a period of  
accessibility, as defined by the user in the user defined data  
set, is current; (D) said periods of accessibility do expire,  
according to the parameters of the user defined data set, so  
that even if the invention is not accessed during a period of  
25 accessibility, any subsequent attempts to access the contents  
of the invention that do not occur during a correct and  
current access period, will be denied; (E) only a single  
access will be allowed in any period of accessibility; (F) the  
ability to reprogram the invention, or in any way alter the  
30 parameters of the user defined data set, is disabled unless  
and until a designated programming period is current, said  
period of time being, as devised and implemented by the  
inventor, a cyclical event of limited duration that occurs in  
a cycle not easily anticipated or aligned with any specific  
35 day of the week; (G) data is collected by the invention for

1 inclusion to the user defined data set by means of prompts  
that are displayed by the display component 11 in groups  
designated as mode prompt sets. Mode prompt sets, each being  
5 a sub-set of the group of all existing stored prompts and  
being the list of prompts that are presented to the user as  
the means of collecting data to be included in the user  
defined data set; (H) data collected by the invention for  
inclusion to the user defined data set is done by means of a  
10 mode prompt set so that any prompt that is proffered to the  
user is applicable to the mode that has been chosen by the  
user, resulting in a programming path that excludes  
opportunities and temptations for the user to change their  
original, primary, and most likely preferred, data choices;  
15 (I) In the present iteration of the invention there are 5 mode  
prompt sets, corresponding to 5 modes of operation, each of  
which reflects a different general mode of behavior designed  
to reflect different modes of behavior that are commonly  
desired by users of such a device. These modes of behavior  
20 each allow for different combinations of (a) the number of  
periods of access in each 24 hour period and (b) the  
requirement or non-requirement of a security code for access  
to the contents of the invention; (J) If a mode that makes use  
of a security code is chosen by the user, and a security code  
25 entered into the security data set, then the invention will  
not open or allow re-programming without prompting the user  
for their security code. If the security code is not entered  
when prompted for, the invention will not open or allow re-  
programming; (K) if the invention is not accessed for a period  
30 of time that is great enough, as defined and stored by the  
inventor, to indicate that its user either does not wish to  
continue using the device or that the user has lost or  
forgotten the access code, then the invention resets and  
unlocks, thus allowing a new user to begin to use the device  
35 or the original user to redefine their password and

1 reestablish their pattern of usage; (L) Because the present  
iteration of the invention makes use of a battery power source  
there is a combination of a voltage sensor and programming  
5 that results in the user being prompted to replace the  
batteries when their output falls below a certain threshold.  
At this prompting the invention is still able to function  
normally. Should the user ignore the prompting to replace the  
batteries, and the output become so low as to possibly create  
10 a "no power lockout" wherein the devices electromechanical  
locking mechanism does not have enough power to unlock the  
device, the invention will become unlocked and stop operation  
until the batteries have been replaced. In this and all  
15 situations involving the loss of power, the data in the  
permanently stored data set, user defined data set, and  
security data set is preserved.

The electronic programmable processor assembly 7 having a  
non-volatile data storage capacity configured and connected to  
the other components of the invention in such a way as to be  
20 able to durably store and make accessible to the electronic  
programmable processor assembly 7 (a) the permanently stored  
data set comprised of data concerning and controlling the  
permanent operational behaviors of the invention, (b) the user  
defined data set comprised of data concerning the schedule of  
25 accessibility as designed and input by the user, and (c) the  
security data set comprised of data concerning the optional  
security code information if such code is being used by the  
user

The user defined data Set being a group of operational  
30 variables, constructed, arranged, displayed, and manipulated  
in such a manner as to provide to the user a manner of  
defining and storing periods of time that when stored,  
accessed, and acted upon by the electronic programmable  
processor assembly 7 will provide an arrangement wherein the  
35 user will be able to access the interior contents of the

1           container, by means of the locking/unlocking action of the  
connected electro-mechanical locking mechanism 6 and  
5           electronic programmable processor assembly 7, strictly in  
accordance with the users wishes as stored in the user defined  
data Set.

The user defined data set being a group of operational variables that are derived from the responses to prompts designed to create a data set corresponding to and capable of faithfully recording parameters equating to, in this iteration 10 of the invention, the following set of questions, instructions, and explanations;

Step 1. Define the current time of day.

15           Step 2. Select Mode

Mode 1- A single access opportunity per day.

Mode 2- A single access opportunity per day, with access code.

20           Mode 3- Multiple access opportunities per day.

Mode 4- Multiple access opportunities per day, with access code.

Mode 5- Anytime access, with security code.

If the user selects Mode 1, the user will be prompted to 25 define the start and end times of the single access opportunity.

If the user selects Mode 2, the user will be prompted to define the start and end times of the single access opportunity and then the user will be prompted to define a 4 30 digit security access code.

If the user selects Mode 3, the user will be prompted to define how many access opportunities the user wishes to define and then the user will be prompted to define the start times and end times of each access opportunity.

1           If the user selects Mode 4, the user will be prompted to  
5        define how many access opportunities the user wishes to define  
          and then the user will be prompted to define the start times  
          and end times of each access opportunity and then the user  
          will be asked to define an four digit security access code.

10          For instance, If the user selects Mode 1 and the user  
          defines an access opportunity that starts at 5:00 P.M. and  
          ends at 6:00 P.M. the user will be able to open the container  
          one time during that window of access. When the user has  
          opened the SnackSafe and removed the users chosen portion of  
          the contents of the device, the SnackSafe door will close and  
          lock automatically and will not be able to be opened again  
          until the next day between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M..

15          If the user selects Mode 2, the operation of the device  
          will be the same as in Mode 1 except that the user will be  
          prompted to enter the users access code before the user will  
          be allowed to open the door and access the contents of the  
          device.

20          The operations Modes 3 and 4 are similar except that the  
          user will have multiple opportunities to access the contents.  
          In all cases, the user can only access the contents one time  
          during any single defined access window.

25          Mode 5 is designed to allow the user to use the SnackSafe  
          as a safe. The user can access the contents of the SnackSafe  
          at any time by inputting the security code.

#### Re-Programming in the preferred embodiment

30          No re-programming will be allowed unless and until a  
          programming opportunity is active. A programming opportunity  
          is indicated by the appearance of an icon in the devices  
          display component. In this iteration, programming  
          opportunities occur every 9 days from the date of the last  
          programming. Programming opportunities are, in this  
35        iteration, of 24 hours duration. If a user does not press the

1           Program button 23 during the active programming opportunity,  
the programming opportunity will expire, and the previously  
5           defined program will remain in force. Pressing the Program  
button 23 during an active programming opportunity allows the  
user to alter all parameters, beginning with the basic  
operating mode as defined at the beginning of this discussion.

Inherent behavioral characteristics of the current embodiment  
10           When the integral processor determines that the time of  
day corresponds to a period of accessibility as defined by the  
user in the programming procedure, the device will respond to  
attempted inputs by the user in one of two ways;

15           If the user has chosen modes 1 or 2 then a single press  
of the open button 21 results in the device unlocking and thus  
allows the user to lift the lid/door assembly 3 and access the  
contents of the device.

20           If the user has chosen modes 3, 4, or 5, then a press of  
the open button 21 results in a prompt for the user's entry of  
the defined access code. When the user responds by pressing  
the numbered buttons that are part of the button set 10 in the  
correct order the unit responds by unlocking and thus allows  
the user to lift the lid/door assembly 3 and access the  
contents of the device.

25           In either instance, the lifting of the lid/door assembly  
3 causes the electro-mechanical locking mechanism 6 to cycle  
itself to a locked state. This locking action actually occurs  
immediately upon the user lifting the lid/door. Thus, when  
30           the device's lid/door assembly 3 is allowed to drop into the  
closed position, its mechanism is pre-locked. This allows for  
instantaneous closing and locking.

35           In either instance, the lifting of the lid/door assembly  
3 terminates the period of accessibility. The device cannot  
be re-opened, after being allowed to close, until the next  
programmed period of accessibility is active.

1        If the device is not in an active period of accessibility  
it does not respond to any inputs by the user.

5        In no way does the device, in this iteration, give an  
outward indication that a period of accessibility is active or  
approaching. In this iteration of the invention, the users  
own memory of his or her decisions concerning the periods of  
accessibility provides the only information that the user will  
have concerning the programmed periods of accessibility. This  
10      is intended to protect the user from unwanted and unnecessary  
temptations in that, if the user does not want to access the  
contents of the device, they will not be prompted to do so by  
any functionality of the invention. Additionally, this  
designed passivity makes it less likely that another person  
15      will access the contents of the invention should the user opt  
for a mode that does not require a security code.

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